

**Department of State Health Services  
Agenda Item for State Health Services Council**

**August 10, 2005**

**Agenda Item Title:** Vital Statistics Program Overview

**Agenda Number:** 3

**Recommended Council Action:**

☒ For Discussion Only

☐ For Discussion and Action by the Council

**Background:**

Vital records are important to the individuals they represent as well as to all Texans. The medical and demographic data collected from these records are used extensively in public health research. The Department uses these records to research the factors that contribute to healthy birth outcomes, diseases affecting Texans, and to make decisions about public health campaigns and expenditure of funds. The Department issues hundreds of thousands of certified copies of vital records each year.

**Summary:**

The Department is proposing to revise the Vital Statistics rule to 1) finance the preservation of vital statistics records by electronic imaging them through Texas Online, as mandated by the Texas Department of Information Resources, and 2) automate the availability and issuance of these documents to improve customer service. The proposed rule changes will result in electronic imaging of all vital records, improved access to all records, increased preservation and security of records, and improved customer service.

**Summary of Stakeholder Input to Date (including advisory committees):** The rule revision will affect over 490 local registrars and about 60 County Clerks who issue birth and death certificates in their registration districts or counties. By statute (Texas Health and Safety Code 191.0045), they must charge the same fee as the State office for these records. The proposed fee increase will raise revenue for local registrars and county clerks as they will not be required to remit any of the increase to the State. In June 2005, the Department notified the local registrars and county clerks regarding the request to revise the rules and change fees. In addition, the proposed rule changes were posted to the Texas Vital Statistics website and e-mailed.N/A

**Proposed Motion:** No Action Required

**Agenda Item Approved by:** Randy Fritz, Chief of Operations

**Presented by:** Geraldine Harris

**Title:** Vital Statistics Program Overview

**Program/Division:** Vital Statistics Program

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**Date  
Submitted**  
07/26/05